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FROM : AMCONSUL, Lagos, Nigeria

DESP. NO. 759 DATE June 18, 1951

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

PRIORITY AIR POUCH

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SUBJECT: Fortnightly Review June 4 to June 16, 1951.

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Political -

The Nigerian political campaign is drawing near its close since it is hoped that elections can begin some time during July. The National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons travelling electioneers are still on the road. Probably the most important development of the past two weeks was a meeting of a large number of the most influential native rulers of the Western Provinces at which support was given the Action Group. Among those present were the Alake of AbeOkuta and the Oni of Ife, probably the two foremost influential native rulers in the region. This development is of considerable importance since they will probably determine the make up of the Western House of Chiefs and it would be very difficult for any party to achieve a majority in the Western Region without their support.

The formation of a new party known as the All-Nigeria Muslim Party has been announced in Lagos. It is doubtful as to what influence this party will have on the large Muslim population of the country since it appears to be made up largely of residents of Lagos and Moslems in the two Southern Provinces while the great Muslim influence is in the north. This group has announced that it will have no alliance with other parties.

The Governor of Nigeria left Lagos on June 14th for a tour of Calabar Province and he is expected to return to Lagos on June 23. He has been making a large number of short tours throughout the country which it is believed are aimed at studying the developments connected with the coming election.

A great deal of attention has been called in the local press to the visit of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of the Gold Coast to the United Kingdom and United States. Dr. Nkruma enjoys a very high prestige in Nigeria particularly among those followers of the NCNC. Dr. Nkruma was in Lagos for a short time between 'planes on June 17 and discussed his visit with the leaders of the NCNC. He expressed his criticism of regionalization within Nigeria remarking that he believed that a formation of a large majority party in Nigeria was required.

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One of the few items of comment published in the Nigerian press on world affairs during recent days was an editorial by the Nigerian Tribune in Ibadan criticizing Western Deputies in Paris in not accepting the inclusion of the North Atlantic Treaty in the proposed agenda for a conference of Foreign Ministers. The preoccupation of the press as a whole with the coming election has cut out almost all foreign news from the press in order that space could be devoted to political diatribes and mudslinging.

Economic

Rainfall has been generally satisfactory throughout the beginning of the rainy season and crop prospects during the next season are favorable. Increased deliveries of foodstuff following the commencement of rain has caused prices to fall to a certain extent in some parts of the country.

A mission sponsored by OEEC has just completed its visit to Nigeria, studying the formation and the hardening of laterite in West Africa. Among the members of the mission was Dr. Lyle T. Alexander of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Another development which was of considerable interest was the announcement of grants totalling £2,800,000 from ECA for development in certain West African colonies including Nigeria. It will be of interest to the Department to know that the Nigerian Government has in no way publicized this grant, although the United States Information Services here issued a release which was published in several organs of the press. It is perhaps indicative of the outlook of the NCNC that this release was not published in the influential West African Pilot, although the two other important organs in Lagos gave it a prominent place.

The Utility, Technical and General Workers Union of Nigeria and the Cameroons has applied for a wage increase for all employees stating that if such increase were not granted it would result into considerable labor unrest which might have serious effects on the economy of the country. It is well known that the cost of living in Nigeria has increased to an alarming extent during the past year and the number of such claims for increase on the part of Unions leaves one to wonder how long the Government will continue its policy of maintaining the present wage level on the excuse that increases would result in price rises. If it were not for the weak and disorganized condition of the Labor Union Movement at the moment it is certain that by this time Unions would have taken positive action toward increasing the wages of their members.

However,

However, the Nigerian Labor Congress, the only organization existing through which cooperative action might be taken is moribund and without any influence at the moment. It is understood that its former General Secretary, Mr. Nduka Eze, who is also the General Secretary of the Amalgamated Unions of United Africa Company workers is under severe criticism from other officers of its union and the NLC concerning alleged misuse of funds. This dispute has led to a serious lack of unity within the labor movement.

Other

Mrs. Azikiwe, the wife of Dr. the Honorable Nnamdi Azikiwe is at present in the United States and it is reported that she was present at the Moral Rearmament World Assembly held a short time ago.

Dr. S.L.A. Manuwa, Director of Medical Services in Nigeria has issued a report on African Inter-colonial Medical Conferences held last month at Dakar and at Bathurst.

A. W. Childs
American Consul General